

Book # 76c
Transcript of
PAHA Speech
October 2009



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SLIDE OF TALK TITLE WITH CLUBHOUSE PICTURE/ OUR NAMES

Good Afternoon. I want to thank PAHA for inviting me here this afternoon to talk about The Woman's Club of Palo Alto.

Before I begin, I'd like to introduce 2 Woman's Club members who will also be speaking to you. They are Aino Vieira da Rosa and our current co-President, Christine Shambora. (AINO AND CHRISTINE STAND)

SLIDE OF CHARLES DICKENS

The title of this talk is "Charles Dickens and the Palo Alto Woman's Club." Before I get accused of false advertising, I'd like to explain that title. In 1869, Charles Dickens was invited to speak at a banquet given by The New York City Press Club. Tickets to this event were a hot item. Women, however, were not allowed to attend. This ~~exclusion~~ infuriated female journalists – in particular – it infuriated Jane Cunningham Croly.

SLIDE OF JANE CUNNINGHAM CROLY/SOROSIS

Croly had been a professional journalist for over 40 years, she was on the editorial board of several NYC newspapers and was the first female journalist to be syndicated nationally. Jane Croly decided to retaliate by forming an all female club of women journalists. The Club was called Sorosis. Unfortunately, no one would rent a meeting room to Sorosis since society considered it improper for women to appear in public without a male companion. The women finally rented a room above Delmonico's Restaurant in Greenwich Village.

A cartoon lampooning Sorosis appeared in Harper's Weekly newspaper.

SLIDE OF CARTOON

It shows women meeting and leisurely reading newspapers or giving speeches while, in the right hand corner, a man is shown nursing a child while a woman leads him into the room on a leash. Despite opposition, Sorosis flourished and Croly realized that women all over the United States were forming clubs for reasons ranging from - suffrage and temperance to civic reform and gardening. Realizing this, Jane Croly invited 100 women's groups from across the nation to attend a conference in NYC. In 1890. Representatives of 63 groups met and formed The General Federation of Women's Clubs - which is the parent organization of the Palo Alto Woman's Club.

So, now you know what Charles Dickens had to do with The Palo Alto Woman's Club! !

Sorosis:

SLIDE OF TALK-TITLE WITH CLUBHOUSE PICTURED OUR NAMES

Good Afternoon, I want to thank FAHA for inviting me here this afternoon to talk about The Woman's Club of Palo Alto.

Before I begin, I'd like to introduce 2 Women's Club members who will also be speaking to you. They are Anna Vieira da Rosa and our current co-President, Christine Thompson. (AINO AND CHRISTINE STAND)

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SLIDE OF JANE CUNNINGHAM CROLY'S ORIGIN

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So, now you know what Charles Dickens had to do with The Palo Alto Woman's Club!

The Woman's Club of Palo Alto is 115 years old – the same age as the City of Palo Alto. Today, Christine, Aino and I will concentrate on the first 20 years and the last 20 years of Club history. I think of these two periods as "The Birth and the Rebirth" of the Woman's Club. I'd like to tell you about The Birth of our Club by describing the lives of 5 early members.

SLIDE OF "SELF IMPROVEMENT, MUTUAL HELP, AND COMMUNITY WORK"

On June 20, 1894, a group of 24 women met in the old Presbyterian Church at the corner of Hamilton and Waverly for the purpose of organizing The Woman's Club of Palo Alto. At this meeting, they adopted a Constitution and decided that Membership would open to any woman who was a resident of Palo Alto and its vicinity, who would sign the Constitution and who would promise to promote the Club's objectives of "Self Improvement, Mutual Help and Community Work." Mary Grafton Campbell was elected President and served in that office from 1894 through 1898.

SLIDE OF MARY GRAFTON CAMPBELL/ THE MOTHER OF THE CLUB/ PRESIDENT FROM 1894-1898

Mary Campbell was a remarkable woman. She had studied in New York, Heidelberg and Vienna to become a physician. After marrying, she and her attorney husband spent time in Chicago, Colorado and San Francisco before moving to Palo Alto to start a family. During her Presidency, the Club grew from 24 members to 110. The list of the Club's accomplishments during this time is truly amazing and it was Mary Campbell who was the bedrock of the organization. At a time when women could not vote, she insisted that the Club was the "woman's arm of the government."

There is more than one reason for Mary Campbell to have earned the title "Mother of the Club." Having lost her only child in infancy, she reared – in part or fully – thirteen girls and boys of other mothers. Her friend, Julia Gilbert said that Mary Campbell

"unconsciously assumed an attitude of motherhood toward every infant, enterprise or needy person that came within her influence."

One of the women encouraged by Mary Grafton Campbell was the feisty Anna Zschokke.

SLIDE OF ANNA ZSCHOKKE/ MOTHER OF PALO ALTO SCHOOLS

2

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SLIDE OF ANNA ZSCHOKKE MOTHER OF PALO ALTO SCHOOLS

SLIDE OF ANNA ZSCHOKKE/MOTHER OF PALO ALTO SCHOOLS

Anna Zschokke was a widow when she arrived in Palo in 1890. She came by wagon with her three children and all her household belongings. Her main reason for settling in our City was the opportunity it afforded for her children to attend Stanford. She was one of the original 24 members of the Woman's Club and she dedicated herself to one of Palo Alto's favorite obsessions – the City Schools.

This photo of Anna is my personal favorite! When you see that look of determination, I think you can understand why she was affectionately known to Club members as "General Whipper-In."

From 1890 to 1894, Anna Zschokke kept a census record of all newcomers, births, deaths and new businesses in the pioneer town of Palo Alto. This census was what enabled The Palo Alto School District to be established.

Until 1893, the children of Palo Alto attended school in Mayfield which was over 2 miles away. Many parents longed for a school that was closer but, in order to form a separate School District, you had to prove 1) that you had enough students and 2) that your town was over two miles from the nearest school. Because of her census, Anna Zschokke, was able to show that there were 54 school age children in Palo Alto and that we were 2.1 miles from the Mayfield school. And, so, in 1893, the Palo Alto School District was established and the City's first elementary school was built on Bryant Street just below University Avenue.

SLIDE OF SCHOOL

By 1897, Anna Zschokke recognized the need for a High School. She used her personal finances to build 2 structures on Forest Avenue for high school students. This larger building at 524 Forest was for classes and a smaller one in back was a science laboratory.

Anna Zschokke benefitted personally from her interest in education in that her three children were Stanford graduates. She, herself, rode her bicycle to the Stanford Campus to take classes for over two years. But, it was Anna Zschokke's dedication to educating all the pioneer children of this City that earned her the title of "Mother of the Palo Alto School System" and that marked the beginning of a long tradition of Palo Alto pride in education.

SLIDE SAYING JULIA GILBERT/MOTHER OF THE PALO ALTO LIBRARY

SLIDE OF ANNA ZSCHOKKE MOTHER OF PAJO ALTO SCHOOLS

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SLIDE SAYING JULIA GILBERT MOTHER OF THE PAJO ALTO LIBRARY

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JULIA GILBERT:

One hundred and fifteen years ago – before the Internet and before Kindle - people actually read books for information and for pleasure. Julia Gilbert was a founding member of the Woman's Club and she spearheaded the Club's effort to establish Palo Alto's first Library. Gilbert had come to Palo Alto in 1891 with her Stanford professor husband. Prior to her marriage, she had been a teacher, a principal and the Superintendent of High Schools in Indiana.

In 1895, the Club decided to open a public reading room as soon as they could find a suitable place to rent. Of course, to rent a place and to buy books, they needed money and so began 7 long and arduous years of fund raising. (Actually, I can attest to the fact that fund raising at the W.C. has never stopped!!!)

Fundraising began by charging members \$1.00 per year in dues. The next step was a Book Social organized by Gilbert at which 200 books were contributed. Five months later, the Club had enough money and books to open a free reading room in the back of Simpkins Stationery Store on University Avenue.

SLIDE OF SIMPKINS STATIONERY STORE

It is said that one of the Club members was the fiancée of Mr. Simpkins so this may explain this first location. Members of the Club staffed the reading room bringing their children and sewing along. The reading room was so popular among residents that it moved twice to larger spaces downtown. By January of 1899, the simple Reading Room had become a Circulating Library and a club member, Annie Hadden and her sister, Elizabeth were hired as librarians. Their joint salary was \$15.00.

SLIDE OF THE READING ROOM WITH ANNIE HADDEN.

Since expenses for the Library were growing, The Club asked the City Fathers for a monthly stipend of \$20.00 for the library. \$10.00 was granted.

By October of 1899, Julia Gilbert realized that the Library Project was draining the Club of both money and energy. Gilbert herself had raised over \$1,000.00 for the Circulating Library. Julia Gilbert encouraged Club members to write letters soliciting funds from The Carnegie Foundation. However, in 1901, before Carnegie funds were granted, The Woman's Club petitioned the City to take over the Club's Library. The necessary number of signatures was acquired and the City was compelled, according to State Law, to provide a Public Library.

SHOW SLIDE OF CITY LIBRARY

When The Woman's Club officially handed their Library over to The City Trustees in 1901, it contained 2,300 volumes, it served 1,000 readers and it had cost the Woman's Club \$3,387.00. The City built a new library in 1904 with a \$10,000.00 grant from the Carnegie Foundation. Anne Hadden was its first librarian.

SHOW SLIDE OF LIBRARY INTERIOR WITH ANNIE HADDEN AND THE FIREPLACE

5

After 7 years of work to give Palo Alto a Library, Julia Gilbert was appointed a Trustee of the Public Library. Gilbert held this post until her death in 1916. It's interesting to note that, in 1911, the City Trustees tried to enact a law which would have prohibited Women from serving as a Library Trustee. As you might guess, The Woman's Club was strongly opposed to such a law and the matter was dropped.

SHOW SLIDE OF FIREPLACE WITH INSCRIPTION

After Julia Gilbert's death, her services to the Library were recognized with a brass plaque hung over the Library's Fireplace. The plaque reads

SHOW SLIDE OF PLAQUE WORDS

" Julia Gilbert - Constant source of inspiration to this library from its beginnings and for seventeen years a trustee, this fireplace is dedicated in loving appreciation of her unfailing service."

SLIDE SAYING "THE WOMAN QUESTION"

After 7 years of work to give Palo Alto a library, Julia Gilbert was appointed a Trustee of the Public Library. Gilbert held this post until her death in 1916. It's interesting to note that in 1911, the City Trustees tried to enact a law which would have prohibited Women from serving as a Library Trustee. As you might guess, The Woman's Club was strongly opposed to such a law and the matter was dropped.

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7-8

Some of their methods were quaint like this flyer advertising the sale of tasty ham sandwiches and a drink at a reasonable price:

SHOW SLIDE OF SANDWICH AD

While others were quite sophisticated

SHOW SLIDE OF THE SANTA CLARA VALLEY BOOK

This book described Santa Clara Valley and its landmarks and sold over 1,000 copies.

SLIDE OF EMILY ELLIOTT-PARDEE KARNS DIXON /PRESIDENT/1909-1911 AND 1919-1920

Credit for the publication of this book goes mostly to Emily Pardee Karns Dixon who was the Chairperson of the Club's Building Committee. For over a year, Emily Dixon and her Committee worked with their architect, Charles Hodges and took bids for the construction of the Clubhouse. In fact, they took 8 bids! Finally, in 1916, construction of the Clubhouse began.

At this point, I'd like to ask Aino da Viera Rosa to come up and tell you about our Clubhouse and it's architecture. Aino has been an architect in Palo Alto for 32 years and a member of the WC since 2006.

AINO AND HER 35 SLIDES

Thank you, Aino.

8-4

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At this point, I'd like to ask Aino de Vries Rose to come up and tell you about our Clubhouse and its architecture. Aino has been an architect in Palo Alto for 35 years and a member of the WOC since 2008.

AINO AND HER 35 SLIDES

Thank you, Aino.

SLIDE OF: 1917 – 1988 WAR AND PROSPERITY

The building of the Clubhouse marks the culmination of the first two decades of Woman's Club History.

Before Christine and I fast forward to the decades between 1989 and 2009, I'd like to share some slides with you.

SHOW SLIDE OF WW 1 SOLDIERS MARCHING DOWN UNIVERSITY AVENUE

This is a photo of WW 1 soldiers marching down University Avenue

SHOW SLIDE OF HOSTESS HOUSE

This is a WW I photo of Hospitality House where Club members put on events for soldiers

SHOW WW 1 PHOTO OF RED CROSS VOLUNTEERS SEWING

Members of the Club participated in Red Cross activities such as sewing items for WW 1 soldiers

SHOW UNCLE SAM POSTER

You all recognize this recruiting poster which was used extensively in WW 11 and during the Korean War

SHOW SLIDE OF VIETNAM WAR PROTESTERS ON UNIVERSITY AVE

This photo shows anti Vietnam protesters marching on University Avenue.

SHOW SLIDE SAYING 1917 – 1988 WAR AND PROSPERITY

It was inevitable that during these years, most of The Women's Club activities were war related.

At the same time, the Club prospered beyond its wildest dreams. During the 1950's, for example, membership in the Woman's Club exceeded 300 and there were over 30 interest groups. It was not until the late 60's that Club membership began to decline. There were many reasons. One of which was that women were entering the work force. To paraphrase the song – "The times, they were a changing."

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SLIDE SAYING: THE REBIRTH : 1989-1999

Traditionally, the Woman's Club does not meet during the summer. So, it was unusual when a letter was sent to the membership by The House and Grounds Committee on July 19, 1988. The House and Grounds Committee was recommending that the Clubhouse be sold for a number of reasons. The main reason was that membership had declined to 75 women who were old and tired and could no longer maintain the Clubhouse. Only a dozen or so members attended meetings.

SHOW SLIDE OF OLD LADIES

Attached to this July letter were Real Estate appraisals ranging from \$600,000.00 to \$800,000.00 and the members were told that, should the Clubhouse be sold, the proceeds would be split among the 75 members. A poll of the members showed that 51 members favored selling, 11 were opposed and 13 abstained. The President of the Club at this time was Margaret Gould, popularly know as "Boots." When Boots returned from her summer vacation in September of 1988, she was, to put it mildly – shocked. But she was also determined to prevent the sale of the Club.

SHOW PA WEEKLY PHOTO WITH BOOTS IN IT

Her main weapon in having the matter of the sale tabled was the legal fact that any proceeds from a sale of the Club would not enrich the members but would revert to another non profit organization. Boots oversaw urgent repairs and upgrades were made. The most ingenious of these upgrades was the installation of an answering machine in the Club Office. This produced an increase in income from Rentals since all inquiries could be responded to.

By January of 1993, 10 new members had joined The Club. The minutes reflect that "at least 6 of the members were relatively young." (Point out 2 in the photo ie Sarah French and Diane Claerbout.)

The new members made a big contribution: they refurbished the building which enabled them to increase both the price and the # of Club Rentals. They also began transcribing the early Minutes of the Woman's Club which both renewed their pride in the Club and enabled them to actively participate in celebrating both the Club's and the City's Centennial in 1994.

SHOW CAKE SLIDE CELEBRATING THE CENTENNIAL (ALONG WITH "PETTICOAT POLITICS")

SLIDE SAYING THE REBIRTH: 1988-1992

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SHOW CAR SLIDE

Palo Alto's Centennial gave the Woman's Club some much-needed exposure and it enticed prominent women on the City Council and School Board to become Members of the Club.

SHOW SLIDE OF POLITICAL FIGURES

Name them

SLIDE OF ME AND EMILY

The years from 1997 to 2000, saw membership double from that year in 1998 when the Clubhouse was almost sold.. The Club came alive again with New Interest Groups such as an Evening Social Hour, an Investment Club, a History Committee as well as a revitalized Philanthropy Committee and Book Club. Most of these new groups met in the evening to better accommodate working members.

The Woman's Club is really fortunate to have had women through the years who were inspirational leaders and who loved the Club. One of these women is our current Co-President - Christine Shambora. Christine was raised in Palo Alto and has held many PTA leadership positions including President of the PTA Council. She has been a member of the Woman's Club since 2000 and will end our Presentation with a description of what the Woman's Club is doing today to make history.

Christine:.....

Here's an ending if you want it:

End with the founders of the Palo Alto Woman's Club are still an inspiration. Granted they lived in a time when Palo Alto had nothing and needed everything. Our times are different. But I think that the enduring message of these women is that one woman can have a dream but many women can make it a reality.

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Selections from 100 thumb prints! – (= FROM WEBSITE)

WOMEN:

IMG0083 – ALICE PARK with sash (060-083), IMG0102, IMG0103, IMG0057, IMG0034, IMG0074

IMG052-104 – ANNE HADDEN

IMG0087 – MARY GRAFTON CAMPBELL

IMG0104 – EMILY PARDEE KARNS DIXON

(116-085) – EMILY RENZEL

(116-056) – ENID PEARSON

IMG0037 – ME

(060-032 – DAVID STARR JORDAN IN 1890)

?LADIES:

IMG0017, 0018, 0021

BUILDINGS:

FRATERNAL HALL – IMG0104, IMG0001, (052-073)

?NORTREE/FRATERNAL – IMG0004, IMG0045

(OLD P.A. HOTEL ON LYT/ALMA – 052-032)

READING ROOM – 1MG0080

1904 LIBRARY – IMG0044, IMG0045, IMG0046(WITH FP), (052-102),(115-015 WITH FP)

1ST HIGH SCHOOL(ZSCHOKE) – (053-039)

?1ST HI SCHOOL/CLASS – IMG0076, IMG0086, IMG0069, IMG0077. (

?SCHOOL- IMG0044, (8TH GRADE – 021-016), (021-052), (1911 HI SCH GRAD – 021-058)

P.A. EARTHQUAKE – IMG0037, IMG0040, (052-097 ON UNIV. AV.)

MEM CHU AFTER EARTHQUAKE - IMG0073, IMG0015, IMG0011, IMG0012

?UNIVERSITY BUILDING – IMG0048, IMG0062, IMG0063

?UNIVERSITY AVE – IMG0093, IMG0077

CAR WITH LEAVES – IMG0003, IMG0004, (079-099), (078-048)

Selections from 100 thumb prints -- (= FROM WEBSITE)

WOMEN

IMG0083 - ALICE PARK with seal (060-083), IMG0102, IMG0103, IMG0057, IMG0034, IMG0074
IMG002-104 - ANNE HADDEN
IMG0087 - MARY GRAFTON CAMPBELL
IMG0104 - EMILY PARDEE KARNIS DIXON
(118-085) - EMILY RENZEL
(118-058) - ENID PEARSON
IMG0037 - ME
(060-032 - DAVID STARR JORDAN IN 1890)

LADIES

IMG0017, 0018, 0021

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(OLD P.A. HOTEL ON LYTALMA - 052-032)
READING ROOM - IMG0080
1904 LIBRARY - IMG0044, IMG0045, IMG0046 (WITH FP), (052-102), (118-016 WITH FP)
1st HIGH SCHOOL (2SCHOKE) - (052-039)
2nd HI SCHOOL CLASS - IMG0076, IMG0086, IMG0089, IMG0077
SCHOOL - IMG0044 (8th GRADE - 021-016), (021-052), (1911 HI SCH GRAD - 021-058)
P.A. EARTHQUAKE - IMG0037, IMG0040, (052-097 ON UNIV. AV.)
MEM CHU AFTER EARTHQUAKE - IMG0078, IMG0045, IMG0011, IMG0015
UNIVERSITY BUILDING - IMG0048, IMG0092, IMG0066
UNIVERSITY AVE - IMG0093, IMG0077
CAR WITH LEAVES - IMG0003, IMG0004, (073-089), (078-048)

STREETS:

IMG0094, 0095, 0096, (053-065 – AERIAL VIEW/COWPER & TENNYSON)

STREET PAVING:

IMG0005, 0007, 0011. 0031, 0032

WORLD WAR 1 AND OTHER WARS:

MAC ARTHUR PARK/ PALO ALTO COMMUNITY HOUSE – IMG004, IMG0011, (052-093)

WAR - IMG0005, 1MG0006, IMG0030, IMG0032, IMG0081, (074-030 & 074-029 – SOLDIERS MARCHING)

NOV. 8, 1908 ARMISTICE DAY - IMG0017, IMG0099

WORLD WAR II AND OTHERS:

BUY WAR BONDS – IMG0042

SOLDIERS – IMG066

WAR PROTEST – IMG0086, IMG0097, IMG0100

RIOTS – IMG0055. IMG0056

?1950 PICTURE WITH VETS – IMG0037, IMG0038

ASSORTED THINGS:

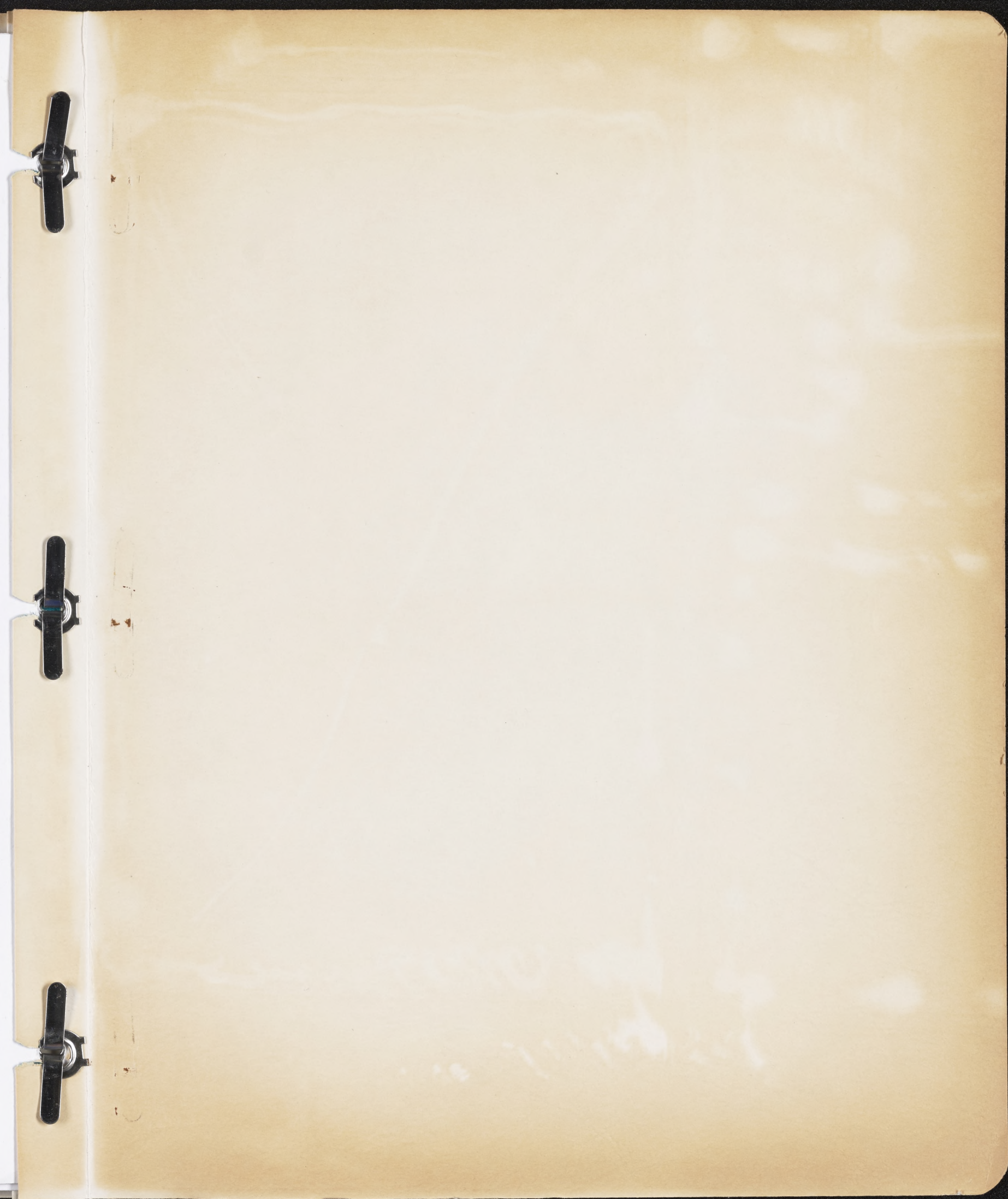
1950'S AND ON

PICTURE ON WC STAGE – IMG0100

MISSION BELLS – IMG0082, 0083

UFO'S:

IMG0020JPG, 0052, 0065, 0073, 0093, 0097
0039PCD, 0079. 0097



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